

**Iowa Department of Natural Resources
Natural Resource Commission**

ITEM

15

DECISION

**TOPIC Cedar Valley Association for Soft Trails (CVAST) – 28E Agreement,
George Wyth State Park, Black Hawk County**

Commission approval is requested to for a 28E agreement between Cedar Valley Association for Soft Trails (CVAST) and the DNR.

George Wyth State Park and the Cedar Valley have an extensive hard-surfaced trail system, and CVAST, which is a group of outdoor enthusiasts that use George Wyth, wants to expand on it by creating more soft trails that can be used for hiking, mountain biking and otherwise accessing remote areas of the park. Creating these trails would bring more visitors to George Wyth State Park and will allow new, expanded and different types of events to take place.

When CVAST originally met with staff to propose this endeavor, DNR expressed concerns with the plans, including the presence of the blue spotted salamander. DNR and CVAST worked with Dr. James Demastes, Biology professor from UNI, and Daryl Howell with the DNR on the locations of the blue spotted salamander in George Wyth to develop trail locations that would avoid their habitat. In addition, DNR and CVAST worked with the DNR Trails Section in developing the trail plans. A Sovereign Lands permit has been issued for the proposed trails. Archaeological clearance is in progress.

DNR also expressed concerns related to conflicts with campers and insufficient staff to maintain additional trails. CVAST responded by recruiting volunteers to work on the trails, including students from Hawkeye Community College and local scout groups. Education of trail users will also be a component of the agreement to assure trails users are clearly aware of where to ride and not ride in order to protect areas from washouts, to avoid disturbing select habitats, and to remove interference with campers at campsites.

Funding to develop and maintain the trails will be raised through CVAST memberships, donations, and grants. Burden on George Wyth State Park's budget will be minimal. Park staff will assist with locating and inspecting the trails. They will also assist with general maintenance as time allows. This agreement is similar to one currently in effect at Summerset State Park.

Kevin Szcodronski, State Parks Bureau Chief
Conservation and Recreation Division
April 8, 2010